# Proposals to Implement an Africa RISING Ethiopian – Highlands Research Component

## Research Component

This proposal addresses Research Component 2 (RC2). RC2 will focus broadly on activities that are required to deliver action at a more integrated, community scale. Importantly, this will include exploiting the potential for peer-to-peer knowledge exchange within communities and on opportunities for strengthening and augmenting existing practises with external innovation. The three key deliverables are:

* Bio-physical and socio-economic benchmarks
* Community knowledge exchange groups (CKEGs)
* Opportunities for scaling innovation (endogenous and exogenous)

## Partnerships

**ICRAF (lead)**: Expertise in the collection, formalisation and interpretation of indigenous technical knowledge. Building participatory institutions within communities.

**ILRI**: Building participatory institutions within communities. Use of benchmarking in CKEGs; Gender analysis[[1]](#footnote-1).

**National Partners**: Community engagement; past experience in the use of diagnostic approaches and tools.

## Research Questions / Hypotheses Addressed

**Research Questions**

* What benchmarks are appropriate for meeting the needs of monitoring progress towards AR-EH / FtF development outcomes at the household level?
* How can CKEGs be constituted to make the best use of knowledge that already exists within communities and to act as a platform for the acquisition and application of new knowledge?
* How can gender equity be properly ensured in the formation and operation of CKEGs.
* How can communities be organised to capitalise on a range of opportunities for scaling innovation in ways that are both equitably targeted and cost effective?

**Hypotheses**

* Based on proper characterisation and stratification (RC1), it is possible to constructs cost-effective suites of benchmarks that are effective sources of knowledge for communities, they can underpin meaningful M and E and do not require exhaustive and expensive household surveys.
* Effective sharing of existing knowledge within communities through CKEGs can be effective in generating development outcomes before exogenous innovation is brought into play.
* CKEGs can also form a strong platform for the introduction and integration of exogenous technologies.
* A balanced analysis of endogenous and exogenous opportunities that focus on bottom-up integration rather than top-down introduction is a more effective mechanism for implementing sustainable intensification at a household level.

## Approach

**Bio-physical and socio-economic benchmarks**

* Collate all the benchmarking data gathered under RC1 and develop a suite of benchmarks that addresses the needs of monitoring progress towards AR-EH / FtF development outcomes.
* Develop and test approaches for actively using benchmarks to inform discussion in CKEGs.
* Establish monitoring processes based on the suite of benchmarks selected.

**Community knowledge exchange groups**

* Establish CKEGs based on equitable gender participation and the opportunities for knowledge transfer amongst strata.
* Develop and test participatory approaches for peer-to-peer benchmarking as a driver of knowledge transfer.
* Develop and test approaches that would allow CKEGs to participate in driving research priorities for AR-EH.

**Opportunities for scaling innovation**

* Identification of barriers to wider adoption of current practises within the community.
* Identification of solutions for lifting these barriers where feasible.
* Identification of entry points for exogenous technologies and management practices.

## Linkages

**Outgoing**

* Opportunities for scaling will drive the implementation of research into scaling practices conducted under RC6

**Incoming**

* The RC1 study of sources of technologies will provide valuable information for defining opportunities for scaling under RC2.
* RC2 will make use of the characterisation and stratification data from RC1 to build robust benchmarks to underpin future monitoring of progress and outcomes.
* The stratifications from RC1 will also be used to establish representative community knowledge exchange groups.
* RC5 will feedback tested technologies and management practices into the scaling opportunities deliverable of RC2.

## Budget

c. $200 000.

1. - We are hoping to strengthen the gender focus of RC2 in particular and AR-EH in general with inputs from a post-doctoral scientist with 50 *per cent* of their time dedicated to the project (to be recruited by ILRI’s Poverty, Gender and Impacts Team) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)